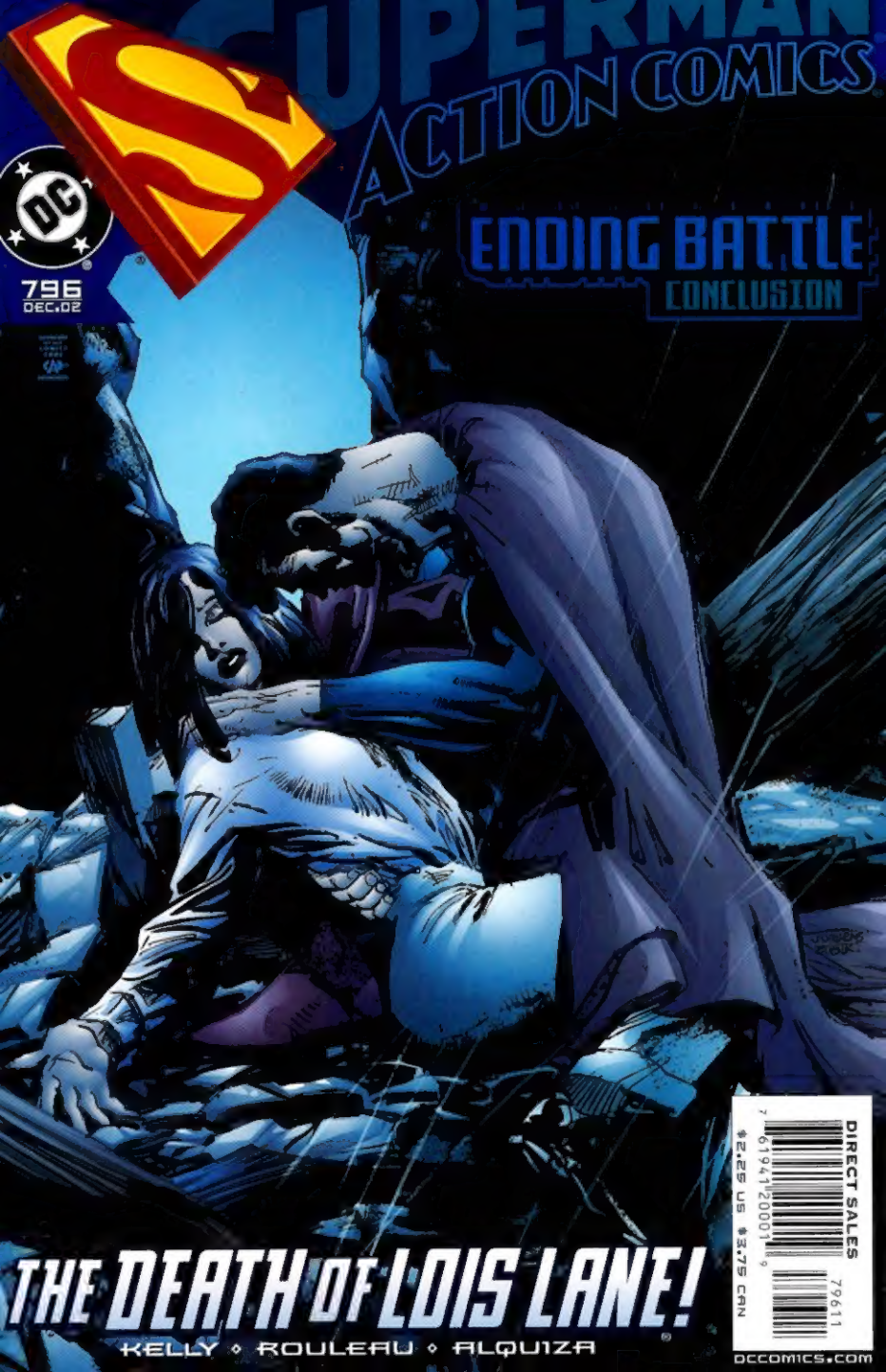
SUPERMAN
ACTION COMICS
796
DEC.02
ENDING BATTLE
CONCLUSION
THE DEATH OF LOIS LANE!
KELLY ◆ ROULEAU ◆ ALQUIZA
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LOIS.
CAN'T SNOOKER YOU, MATE. SHE WON'T BE PLAYING REPORTER FOR A WHILE, THAT'S FOR SURE.
HER HEARTBEAT. I CAN STILL HEAR HER HEARTBEAT --
DAMN, YOU ARE SIMPLE-MINDED.
YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY TWO PEOPLE IN THE UNIVERSE -- OR IN THE ROOM EVEN!
BIT OF A LETDOWN, THIS MOMENT OF SHOCK. 'SPECTED MORE OF A ROW AFTER PICKING APART YOUR LIFE PIECE BY PIECE.
SEE IF WE CAN'T GET THINGS BACK RIGHT WITH A LITTLE TWEAK...
THAT HEARTBEAT YOU'RE SUCKING TO LIKE AN IRISHMAN T'HIS CORNBEEF HASH? AIN'T HERS. IDIOT. S'MINE.

THE LAST

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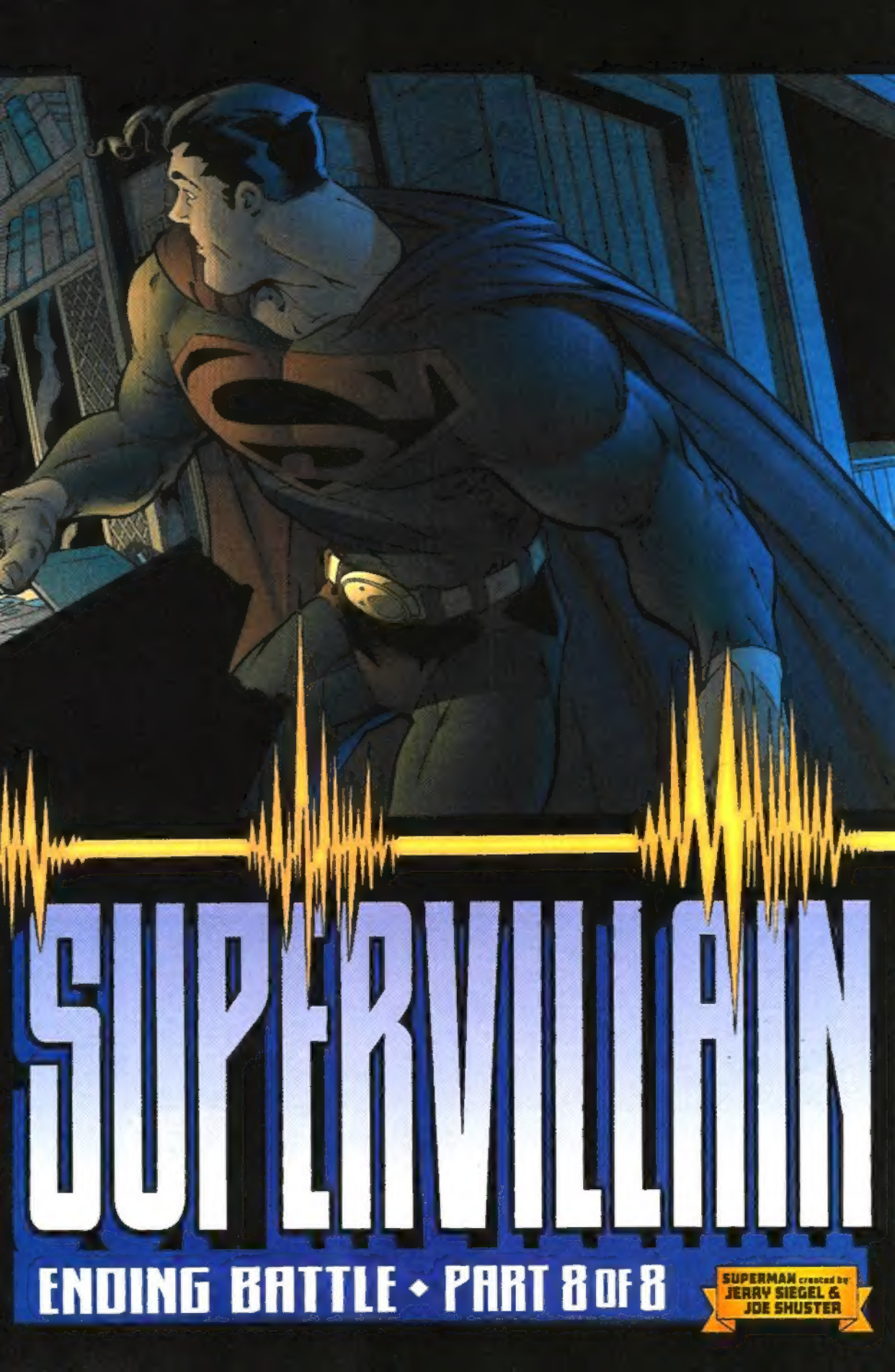

SUPERVILLAIN
ENDING BATTLE • PART 8 OF 8
SUPERMAN created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER

NO.
NO.
:SIGH:
YOU'RE A REAL "KICK THE TIRES AND CHECK THE TEETH" KINDA GUY, AREN'T YOU?
THUD
DEAD AS TECHNO.
BET YOU'RE WISHIN' YA HADN'T SPENT SO MUCH TIME WRASSLIN' METALLO FOR THE UMPTEENTH TIME, HUH?
I...
AND THUS, THE STUDENT WAS ENLIGHTENED.

YOU SEE IT ALL NOW, DON'T YOU? THE ABSURDITY OF WHO YOU ARE AND EVERYTHING YOU'VE EVER DONE?
YOU SEE THAT I WAS RIGHT WHEN I TOLD YOU IT'S ALL GARBAGE..
BACK WHEN YOU TOOK THE FIGHT OUT OF ME AN' THE ELITE ON JUPITER. THE DAY YOU BLEW MY PROGRAM TO HELL.
"PRETTY POWERFUL OUT OF YOUR SWEAT, BLOOD AND SMUGNESS ON YOUR BREATH... TELLING ME HOW THE DAMN WORLD WORKS...
"SPARING MY LIFE. BET THAT LOOKS LIKE A BIG SCREW-UP NOW, DON'T IT?
"I WASN'T IN A PRISON A YEAR BEFORE YOUR GOVERNMENT CAME TO ME WITH A JOB OFFER TO CUT MY TIME. THAT'S TRUTH, JUSTICE AND THE AMERICAN WAY AT WORK, FRIEND -- ESPECIALLY DURING WARTIME.
"EVER WONDER HOW LUCKY LEX WAS ABLE TO DODGE MARTIAN MANHUNTER'S MIND PROBES? HOW HE COULD UNKNOW HIS PART IN THE IMPERIEX WAR?

"HE'S HAD A GUARDIAN ANGEL -- ME. AND IN EXCHANGE, WHEN WAR WAS DECLARED, I GOT A FREE PASS.
"I BECAME YOUR SHADOW, CONSTANTLY SCANNING FOR CRACKS IN THAT ALIEN DOSPILE YOU CALL A MIND.
"WASN'T 'TIL YOUR FATHER-IN-LAW BIT IT THAT YOU FINALLY ACTED HUMAN... WEAK, UNSURE OF YOURSELF...
"CRYING OUT FOR LOIS. THAT WAS THE CHINK IN YOUR ARMOR. YOUR WIFE. I HAD YOU. I HAD YOUR LIFE.
"MA, PA (SO APPLE PIE), THE GANG AT THE PLANET... AND THEY HAD TWO FRIENDS, AND THEY HAD TWO FRIENDS...
"READ MINDS ACROSS THE COUNTRY 'TIL I KNEW EVERYTHING. THEN THE FUN STARTED...
"LEX WAS SO HAPPY TO GET DIRT ON YOU, HE DIDN'T EVEN STOP TO THINK HOW CONVENIENT THE WHOLE THING WAS...
"HE NEVER HAD A CLUE THAT THE WHOLE "SMALLVILLE FILE" WAS A MENTAL IMPLANT. HE COULDN'T WAIT T'START PICKING YOU APART."
AS TO THE REST, THEY DON'T KNOW YOUR CLEAN LI'L SECRET... THEY JUST KNEW THEY STOOD A CHANCE BEIN' ON A TEAM THAT WOULD FINALLY BREAK SUPERMAN.
END OF BACKSTORY. I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GONNA SAY NEXT, OBVIOUS AS IT IS --
WHY?

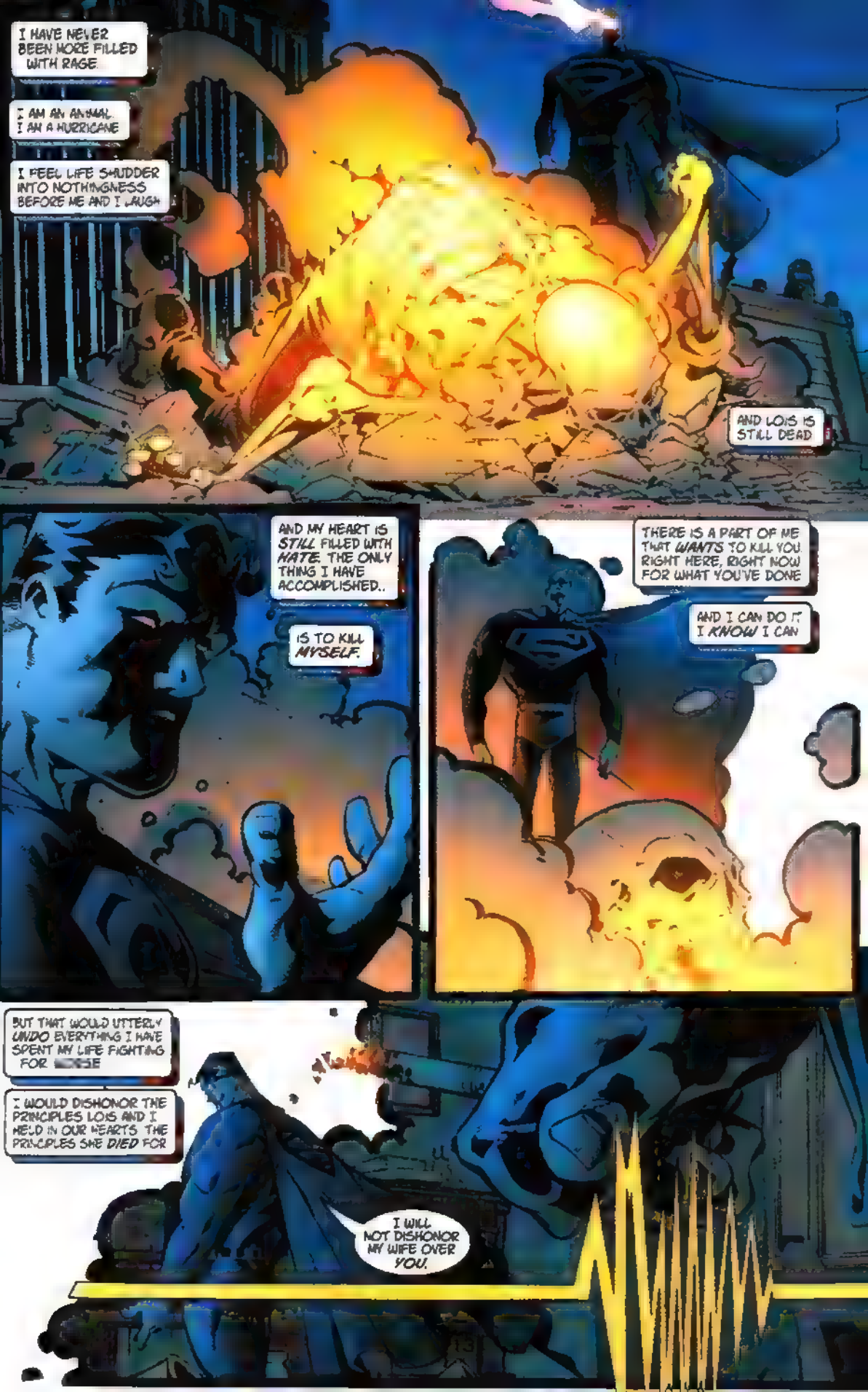
BECAUSE I HATE YOU.
BECAUSE YOU'RE STUPID.
BECAUSE I WANTED TO PULL YOU OUT OF YOUR TOWER AND SHOW YOU BEYOND QUESTION HOW THE BLOODY WORLD WORKS FOR REAL PEOPLE!
YOU'VE SPENT THE LAST 24 HOURS PLAYING A GAME -- MY GAME. YE BEAT THE STUFFING OUT OF EVERY SODDIN' "SUPERVILLAIN" WORTH A SQUIRT...
YE "SAVED THE CITY." HELL, I'LL GO A STEP FURTHER, "YE SAVED THE WORLD, YOU STUD!" NOT A SINGLE LIFE LOST... EXCEPT ONE.
THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE OF THEM ALL. YOUR LIFE... IS NOW A TRAGEDY. YOUR LIFE IS NO LONGER FAIR.
YOU'VE GOT CANCER. YOUR BABY GOT RUN OVER BY A BUS. YOUR HOUSE WAS FIREBOMBED. PAIN. LOSS. ANGER. CIRCUMSTANTIAL HELL.
YOU'RE FINALLY ONE OF US. HUMAN.
HOW DOES IT FEEL?
YOU'RE THE TELEPATH...
READ MY MIND.

KA-CHOOM
THAT'S A LOVE. FINALLY HUMAN.
TOLD YOU YOU WEREN'T ANY BETTER THAN ME. PUSH COMES TO SHOVE, WE'RE ALL ANIMALS.
EVEN SAINT LOIS.
SHUT UP.
ZAAK!
TSK TSK HEAT VISION AGAIN? SORRY...
REFLECTIVE IMPLANTS. THE LATEST IN ANTI-YUTZ TECHNOLOGY. NO ON-THE-SPOT BRAIN SURGERY THIS TIME, MATE.
YOU WANT TO TAKE ME DOWN --

-- YOU'D BETTER START ACTING LIKE IT!
NNNGH
OH, COME ON. THAT'S A LITTLE TELEKINETIC LOVETAP! YOU'RE NOT TRYING, CLARK.
PWHOOM
YOU NEED MORE INCENTIVE TO FIGHT LIKE A MAN?
HOW ABOUT A TELEPATHIC RETROSPECTIVE ON YOUR WIFE'S LAST HOUR OF LIFE?
BLOW BY BLOW? RIP BY CRACK? THE PART WHERE HER HIPS SNAP IS A RIOT.
OR MAYBE YOU'D LIKE TO HEAR IT WHEN SHE CURSES YOU FOR COMING INTO HER LIFE.
WHEN SHE CALLS YOU FILTHY. "THAT ALIEN."
OH, SHE DOES HAVE A FLAIR FOR CUSSIN', THAT ONE. ALTHOUGH HER MOUTH IS FULL WITH BLOOD AROUND THAT PART -- YOU'LL HAVE TO WORK A BIT TO HEAR HER.

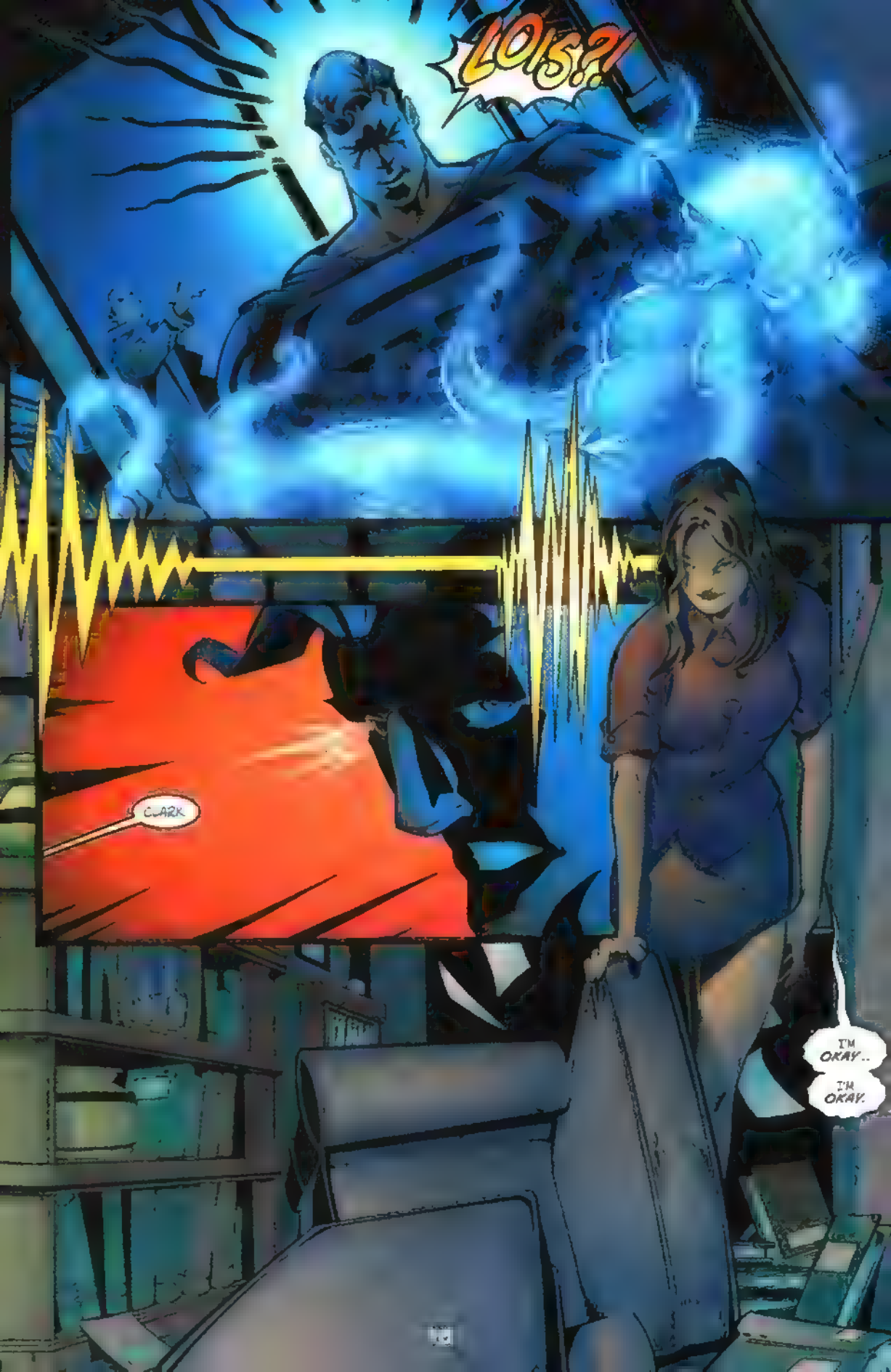
GRAAAAGH!
THAT'S A BUTTON!
NO MORE TALKING!
KRAKT
THIS ENDS NOW!
THWAKKT
GFFF
NICE SHOT, "SMALLVILLE." THAT WAS MY JAW.
COURSE, YE STILL HIT LIKE YER WIFE.
FOR YOUR SAKE IT BETTER... 'CAUSE I'M CONSIDERING MAKING THIS AN ANNUAL EVENT
SWING BY KANSAS AND "PULL A LOIS" ON MA, AND FINISH OFF PA NEXT YEAR THEN JIMMY AND PERRY AFTER THAT
GONNA PRINT UP T-SHIRTS AN' EVERYTHING.

I'LL KILL YOU!
THAT'S THE FUNNY THING, CLARK... YOU WON'T... YOU CAN'T.
LOOK AT ME. I'M A MONSTER WITH A BADGE AND I HAVE THE PRESIDENT OF THE U.S. OF BLEEDING A IN MY POCKET --
-- AND A MAD ON TO CRACK OPEN EVERY MEMBER OF YOUR FAMILY AND SUCK OUT THE GOOEY BITS. AGAIN... AND AGAIN... AND AGAIN.
BUT YOU STILL WON'T DO IT SOMEWHERE INSIDE, YOU'LL FIND A CHEEK TO TURN . "DREAMS SAVE US. DREAMS LIFT US UP AND TRANSFORM US. I SWEAR..."
"UNTIL MY DREAM OF A WORLD WHERE DIGNITY, HONOR, AND JUSTICE BECOMES THE REALITY WE ALL SHARE --"
"I'LL NEVER STOP FIGHTING."
PONCY GIT.. YOU CAN'T EXIST IN THE REAL WORLD YOU JUST CAN'T.


I HAVE NEVER BEEN MORE FILLED WITH RAGE.
I AM AN ANIMAL. I AM A HURRICANE
I FEEL LIFE SHUDDER INTO NOTHINGNESS BEFORE ME AND I LAUGH
AND LOIS IS STILL DEAD
AND MY HEART IS *STILL* FILLED WITH *HATE*. THE ONLY THING I HAVE ACCOMPLISHED..
IS TO KILL *MYSELF*.
THERE IS A PART OF ME THAT *WANTS* TO KILL YOU RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW FOR WHAT YOU'VE DONE
AND I CAN DO IT. I *KNOW* I CAN
BUT THAT WOULD UTTERLY *UNDO* EVERYTHING I HAVE SPENT MY LIFE FIGHTING FOR [redacted]SE
I WOULD DISHONOR THE PRINCIPLES LOIS AND I HELD IN OUR HEARTS THE PRINCIPLES SHE *DIED* FOR
I WILL NOT DISHONOR MY WIFE OVER *YOU*.

LEMME SQUARE THIS ONE UP . WHILE YOU WERE PLAYING 'COWBOYS AN' IDIOTS! I CAME INTO YOUR HOUSE AND KILLED YOUR WIFE...
...AND YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE THE GUTS TO HIT ME?
I DIDN'T SAY THAT.
I SAID I'M NOT GOING TO KILL YOU. IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANTED.. YOU LOSE.

VENGEANCE IS NOT JUSTICE.
BUT THIS ISP WHAT I DID... WHAT YOU WON'T --?
IT DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU RUN. I'LL FIND YOU WITHIN THE HOUR. .
SOON AS I PUT LOIS SOMEWHERE SAFE, IT WILL BECOME MY LIFE'S AMBITION TO ENSURE YOU NEVER TASTE FRESH AIR EVER AGAIN
..
YOU'RE THE REAL DEAL, AREN'T YOU? THIS ISN'T A WUSS THING. YOU'RE NOT AFRAID OF ME
YOU STILL BELIEVE EVEN AFTER EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED, YOU'RE GONNA HUNT ME DOWN AN TOSS ME IN THE CLINK
BUT YOU WON'T KILL ME EVER
NEVER
NEVER
THE END.


LOIS?!
CLARK
I'M OKAY..
I'M OKAY.

HE WANTED YOU TO DO IT. THE SICK CREEP. HE MADE YOU SEE HE DEAD. MADE YOU THINK IT WAS REAL.
HE WANTED YOU TO KILL HIM. EVEN THOUGH I WASN'T DEAD.
BUT YOU WOULDN'T. HE COULDN'T BEAT YOU.
ONE MISTAKE ONE HORROR PUSH A MAN SO FAR THAT HE BREAKS — BUT THEN FINDS OUT HE WAS WRONG.
THING LIKE THAT'LL CRIPPLE A MAN FOR LIFE.
THAT'S WHAT I WANTED I WANTED YOU TO BREAK YOURSELF
LOIS.
BUT NOT YOU. NEVER YOU.
THE REAL [illegible] DEAL
GO ON... YER THE ONLY TWO PEOPLE IN THE UNIVERSE.
I NEED A DRINK.

VREEEEEEM
CHEERS, MATE
WHA —?
??
VREEEEEEM
NO!
MY PRIVATE FILES! SOMEONE PURGED ALL MY FILES ON —
VREEEEEEEEM
NO! THAT'S MY PROOF THAT SUPERMAN IS

SUPERMAN IS...
HE...
I CAN'T REMEMBER. I CAN'T REMEMBER WHO SUPERMAN IS.
WHAT DID YOU DO TO ME, BLACK? WHAT DID YOU DO?
HEH. FOOL.

"WHEN I WAS A CHILD... I DREAMT OF CHILDISH THINGS..."
AND THEY WAS BURNED AND BEAT AND MOLESTED AND MURDERED OUTTA ME... AND I THOUGHT THAT'S ALL THERE WAS.
AND THEN I MET YOU... AN' I HATED THAT YOU MADE ME FEEL LIKE A CHILD DREAMIN' AGAIN...
BUT THAT'S THE THING, AIN'T IT? YOU WERE REAL... AND I...
I BECAME A %@#! SUPERVILLAIN.
CHEERS, MATE.
KABOOM
AMBASSADOR

WE HOLD ONE ANOTHER FOR THREE DAYS AND NIGHTS, DOING NOTHING ELSE.
BLACK ISN'T COMING BACK. I KNOW IT IN MY HEART.
LOIS ISN'T SURE. SHE HAS NIGHTMARES. I TRY MY BEST TO KISS THEM AWAY, BUT IT'LL TAKE A WHILE, I'M SURE.
I HAVE BAD DREAMS OF MY OWN. I FIGHT THROUGH A THOUSAND THOUSAND VILLAINS, ACROSS A THOUSAND THOUSAND MILES OF DESERT, AND IN THE END...
...THERE'S NOTHING THERE.
ON THE DAWN OF THE FOURTH DAY, LOIS STRETCHES LIKE SHE USED TO, SETTLES AGAINST MY CHEST AND WHISPERS...
"YOU WERE *RIGHT* TO WALK AWAY. EVEN IF HE HAD... DONE IT... YOU WERE *RIGHT*...
"THAT'S WHO YOU ARE. THAT'S THE MAN I LOVE.
"YOU SHOULD GO BACK TO WORK NOW."

SO I DID.
I HAVEN'T HAD A BAD DREAM SINCE.
JK DR Ma
THE END